

IN THE CLAIMS

1-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) A method for renting and charging a storage system, in which an owner of a storage system rents and charges the storage system to a user of the storage system,

wherein said storage system is set in a user site and a charging system is set in an owner site, and

wherein said storage system has a channel control unit which is connected to a host computer and responds to requests from the host computer;

a cache memory which stores data sent by the host computer under control of said channel control unit;

a disk control unit which controls a plurality of storage devices so as to store said data stored in said cache memory into said storage devices and

a shared memory which stores control information according to said channel control unit and said disk control unit, comprising the steps of:

holding requests of using a plurality of volumes made from said storage devices in said shared memory, which are set

by an operating unit connected to said channel control unit or disk control unit;

recording information of a state of use of said volumes into a use management table in accordance with said requests of using said volumes;

reading said information of said state of use by referring to said use management table under control of said channel control unit or said disk control unit;

sending said read information of said state of use under control of said channel control unit or said disk control from the storage system to a charging system of said owner;

sending a user identification ID, a usable volume of said volumes for said user at an initial setting stage, and an additional volume that cannot be used unless said user conducts a new operation for adding the additional volume with said operating unit from said storage system in said user site to a charging system of said owner in said owner site; and

charging said user of said user identification ID for said usable volume for said user at an initial setting stage and said additional volume added by said new operation by said charging system in said owner site.

5. (Previously Presented) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 4, wherein the

usable volume for said user at an initial setting stage and said additional volume include at least one of a disk volume and a cache volume provided in said storage system.

6. (Previously Presented) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 4, wherein charging for the usable volume for said user at an initial setting stage is calculated by compensation for said unusable volume, and charging for said additional volume is calculated by compensation for a used volume of said additional volume.

7. (Previously Presented) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 5, wherein charging for the usable volume for said user at an initial setting stage is calculated by compensation for a volume, and charging for said additional volume is calculated by compensation for a used volume of said additional volume.

8. (Previously Presented) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 6, wherein charging for said additional volume is further calculated by compensation for an unused volume of said additional volume.

9. (Previously Presented) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 7, wherein charging for said additional volume is further calculated by compensation for an unused volume of said additional volume.

10. (Previously Presented) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 7, further comprising the step of:

transferring starting information for indicating that said user starts using said storage system from said storage system in said user site to said charging system of said owner in said owner site, wherein the charging system of said owner starts charging to the user.

11. (Previously Presented) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 8, further comprising the step of:

transferring starting information for indicating that said user starts using said storage system from said storage system in said user site to said charging system in said owner site, wherein the charging system of said owner starts charging to the user.

12. (Previously Presented) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 11, wherein charging is started after a predetermined period elapses from the point of reception of said starting information.

13. (Previously Presented) The method for renting and charging a storage system according to claim 11, further comprising the step of:

starting charging after a predetermined period elapses from the point of reception of said starting information by said charging system of said owner.

14-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) In a system having a storage system that is owned by an owner and rented to a user, a method for renting and charging for the use of the storage system,

wherein said storage system is set in a user site and a charging system is set in an owner site, and

wherein said storage ~~device~~system has a channel control unit which is connected to a host computer and responds to requests from the host computer;

a cache memory which stores data sent by the host computer under control of said channel control unit;

a disk control unit which controls a plurality of storage devices so as to store said data stored in said cache memory into said storage devices and

a shared memory which stores control information according to said channel control unit and said disk control unit,

comprising the steps of:

holding requests of using said storage devices in said shared memory, which are set by an operating unit connected to said channel control unit or disk control unit;

recording information of a state of use of said storage devices into a use management table in accordance with said requests of using said storage devices;

reading said information of said state of use by referring to said use management table under control of said channel control unit or said disk control unit;

sending said read information of said state of use under control of said channel control unit or said disk control from the storage system to a charging system of said owner;

providing the user with an initial volume of storage space of the storage system;

charging the user for use of the ~~an~~ initial volume of storage space of the storage system in said user site at a predetermined rate by said charging system in said owner site;

providing an added volume of storage space of the storage system in said user site as needed by the user;

charging the user for a portion of the added volume that is actually used by the user by said charging system in said owner site;

wherein the owner of the storage system is notified when the user begins using a portion of the added volume.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein after a fixed period of time determined by a contract, the user is charged for the portion of the added volume actually used and a percentage of the portion of added volume that is not used.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein information about the state of use of the storage system by the user is recorded in said management table, and wherein the state of use information stored in the management table is used in order to determine how much the user is to be charged for renting the storage system.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of:

copying data stored in a first portion of the storage system in said user site into a second portion of the storage system in said user site and charging the user for the use of the second portion of the storage system at a rate lower than for use of the first portion of the storage system by said charging system in said owner site.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21, further comprising the steps of:

providing a display terminal to the user in said user site; and

providing a display terminal to the owner in said owner site;

wherein both the user's display terminal and owner's display terminal are connected to the storage system via the internet so that both terminals can receive information regarding the state of use of the storage system by the user.

26. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 22, wherein information about the state of use of the storage system by the user is recorded in said management table, and wherein the state of use information stored in the management

table is used in order to determine how much the user is to be charged for renting the storage system.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 26, further comprising the steps of:

providing a display terminal to the user in said user site; and

providing a display terminal to the owner in said owner site;

wherein both the user's display terminal and owner's display terminal are connected to the storage system via the internet so that both terminals can receive information regarding the state of use of the storage system by the user.

28. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 27, further comprising the step of:

copying data stored in a first portion of the storage system in said user site into a second portion of the storage system in said user site and charging the user for the use of the second portion of the storage system at a rate lower than for use of the first portion of the storage system by said charging system in said owner site.